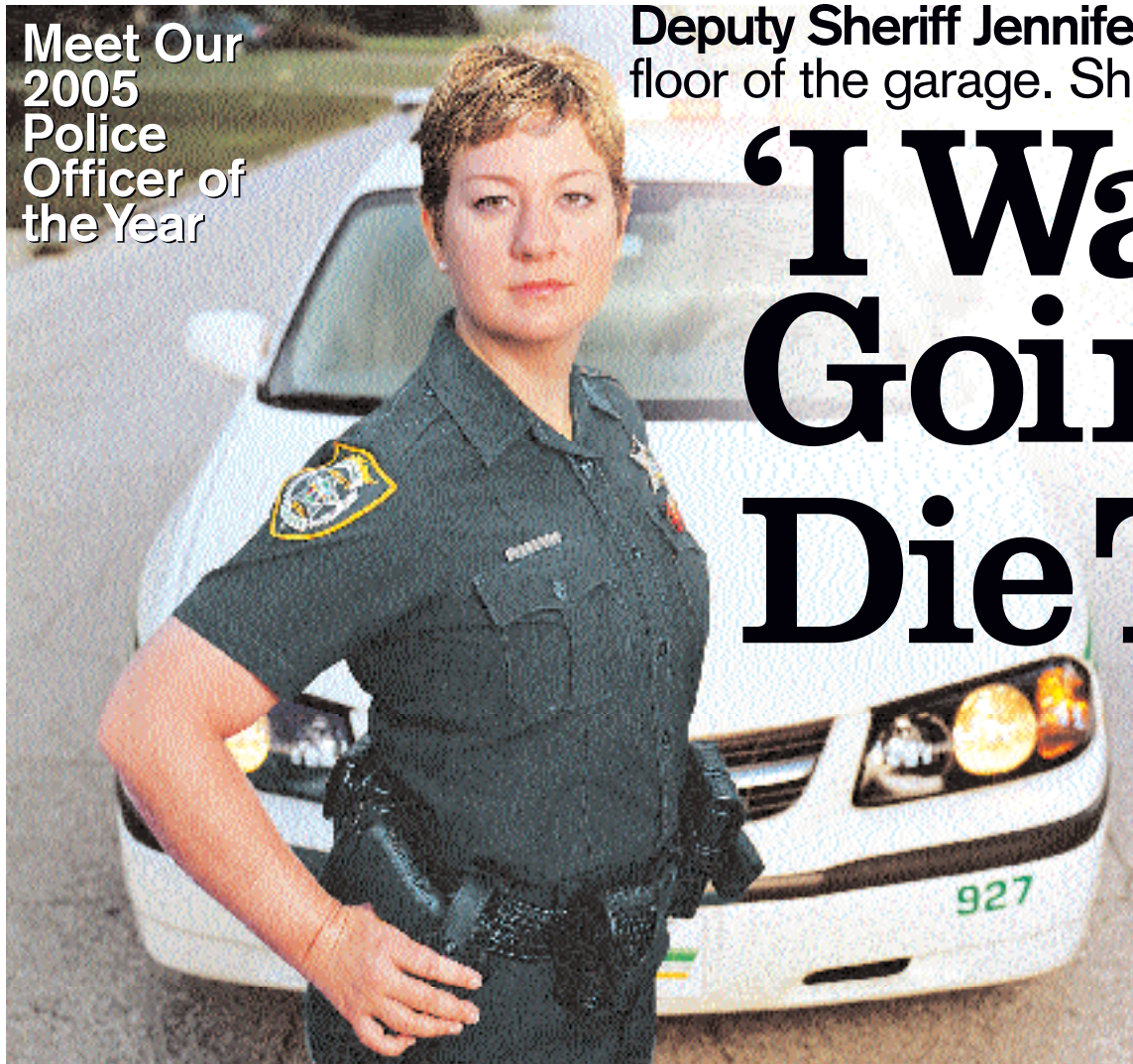


Meet Our
2005
Police
Officer of
the Year

Deputy Sheriff Jennifer Fulford lay bleeding on the floor of the garage. She had been shot 10 times.

'I Wasn't Going To Die There'

By Larry Smith



says. "His first few shots missed me, and I hit him with my Glock .45. He fell back and slid down the wall in a seated position, but he kept firing.

"I ducked behind the van," Fulford continues. "I sensed movement up front, and there was John Dzibinski. He began firing across the hood." Dzibinski, 26, hit Fulford in the right knee and in the left ankle, thigh and buttock. "Bullets were ricocheting everywhere off the concrete floor," she recalls.

Meanwhile, Jenkins was still firing from against

ISOLA ALLEN, 32, WAS PREPARING to drive her son Dextin to school one morning when three men pulled into the driveway, blocking her path. One of them pushed himself into Allen's van and drove it back into the garage. All three then forced her out of her vehicle and into the family's home in Pine Hills, Fla.

Stranded with his 2-year-old twin sisters in the van, Dextin, 8, reached into his mother's purse and used her cell phone to call 9-1-1. Orange County Deputies Dwayne Martin and Kevin Curry responded, followed shortly by Deputy Sheriff Jennifer Fulford and a trainee.

Seeing the police outside, the robbers sent Allen to tell them that everything was all right. Instead, she told them her family was under attack.

"My babies, my babies!" she cried, pointing toward the van. The three gunmen were alone in the house, with easy access to the adjoining garage.

Fulford didn't hesitate. "I'm going to try to get

"Bullets were ricocheting everywhere off of the concrete walls," Fulford recalls.

the kids," she said. She walked to the garage, followed by Deputy Martin.

"I crouched beside the van, but the doors were locked," Fulford recalls. "I began hearing voices from the house, and then I heard three or four shots." Fulford hit the floor and radioed the call sign "232": Shots fired.

Seconds later, George Jenkins, 25, appeared behind the van and began shooting at Fulford. "I was behind the left wheel well, maybe 8 feet away," she



Officers prepare to storm the Allen family's garage in a neighborhood of Pine Hills, Fla., known to police as "Crime Hills."

the wall. One of his bullets hit Fulford in the right shoulder—her shooting arm.

"I lost feeling and dropped my gun but managed to grab it with my left hand," she says. "I knew Dzibinski was still out there."

Jenkins stopped firing and began to moan, but Dzibinski picked up where he'd left off. Fulford hit him twice in the head. Dzibinski

then stumbled out into the driveway, where he shot Deputy Martin in the shoulder. The felon finally collapsed when Martin managed to shoot him in the leg.

Still on the floor of the garage, "I saw blood running out of my sleeve," Fulford recalls, "and I felt light-headed. I blacked out for a few seconds and then I heard Kevin [Curry] yelling my name, ask-

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ing if I was OK. I said, 'No, please help me. Get me the heck out of here.'"

Deputy Fulford was rushed to the hospital and treated for multiple gunshot wounds. The doctors patched her up fine, Fulford says, though one bullet remains in her left buttock. She also suffered nerve damage in her right arm and is gradually getting the feeling back.

The shootout in Pine Hills took place on May 5, 2004. Deputy Fulford returned to active duty less than four months later, on Aug. 30, and she married in September.

"When you go through something like that," she says, reflecting on her ordeal, "mindset is really impor-



Isola Allen, 32, was preparing to drive her 8-year-old son to school when three violent drug dealers attacked the family at gunpoint.


"My babies, my babies!" their mother cried, pointing to the garage.

tant. I was not going to die in that garage." Luckily, she explains, "We had just received training for off-hand shooting. They teach you how to shoot with your weak hand, reload, rack the slide with your gunbelt or your shoe." Deputy Fulford was carrying a Glock .45, semiautomatic. "It probably sounded like an automatic that day," she says. "I was not thinking about what I was doing, I was just reacting. I'm glad I had that training." The entire shootout lasted less than 50 seconds. Jenkins died in the garage; Dzibinski died in a hospital eight days later. The third man, Shaun Byrom, then 20, had

remained in the house and eventually surrendered.

At the crime scene, police found 341 pounds of marijuana and \$54,000 in cash. The suspects had planned to steal the contraband from Isola's husband, Clinton, who was in Jamaica at the time. Mrs. Allen served two months for marijuana trafficking and agreed to testify against Byrom—who received a life sentence and will be eligible for parole in 10 years—as well as her husband, who is awaiting trial. The children stayed with relatives while their mother was in jail.

It wasn't exactly a happy ending, but Fulford knows it could have been much worse: "If those men had closed the [garage] door and taken the kids hostage," she says, "they probably would have ended up dead." And how does she feel about having risked her own life to save them?

"Those kids didn't choose to be there," Fulford says. "I had to do what I could to get them out." 

Deputy Fulford will be honored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and PARADE at the IACP's convention on Sept. 27 in Miami Beach, Fla.

10 More Heroes Among Heroes

These officers also will be honored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and PARADE for their outstanding police work.



Sgt. Richard Plotke, Chicago P.D. Sgt. Plotke, 36, accompanied two detectives investigating a burglary and pistol-whipping to a Chicago apartment, where they planned to execute a search warrant. When the suspects opened fire on the three officers, Plotke killed one and wounded the other.



Officer Jaime Esparza, El Paso P.D. When a sedan going the wrong way crashed into an RV carrying nine persons, Officer Esparza, 38, rescued all nine shortly before flames engulfed the vehicle and it exploded. The driver of the sedan, which was lodged inside the RV, died in the crash.



Lt. David Stone, Chesterfield County, Va., P.D. After a storm flooded the area and forced Sandy Rawls' car into a creek, Lt. Stone, 40, floated downstream in a powerful current, broke open the rear window and pulled her from the car. He gave her his own life preserver, then delivered her to safety.



Trooper Shaun Smart, Ohio State Highway Patrol Since October of 2000, Trooper Smart, 42, has seized more than 5000 pounds of marijuana, cocaine and other drugs from motorists. He also teaches other officers his method of observing changes in driving behavior to identify suspects.



Officer James Niggemeyer, Columbus, Ohio, P.D. A gunman had killed four and wounded three in a nightclub when Officer Niggemeyer, 31, arrived on the scene to find him holding a hostage in a headlock. Niggemeyer shot the killer with a .12 gauge from 20 feet away, saving the hostage's life.



Officer Keith Cowart, Melbourne, Fla., P.D. Called to the scene of an armed robbery at a TGI Friday's restaurant, Officer Cowart, 49, caught one suspect as he attempted to escape and shot a second, killing him before he was able to shoot a hostage who had broken free and was running away.



Lt. Michael Fossum, Minneapolis, P.D. Lt. Fossum, 45, used painstaking detective work to solve three major cases in 2004, including a string of 52 bar robberies, 12 pharmacy robberies for the drug Oxycontin and the serial hijackings of delivery trucks carrying cigarettes and groceries.



Master Officer Steven Graff, Stuart, Fla., P.D. Officer Graff, 43, helped more than 30 residents escape from a burning building before learning that an old man was still trapped inside. He ran back in, braving the flames and kicking down doors until he found the man and carried him to safety.



Trooper Marion Fletcher, Massachusetts State Police After a high-speed pursuit of four armed suspects, Trooper Fletcher, 42, single-handedly executed a "felony stop," halting the getaway car and detaining all four until backup arrived. Two small children were rescued from the vehicle.



Sgt. John Faulis, Las Vegas Metro P.D. Arriving at the scene of a raging fire in an apartment building, Sgt. Faulis, 33, rescued everyone from three units engulfed in flames, then kicked in a steel door and charged into a blazing room to rescue an elderly woman and her pet poodle.



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